A NEW

TEST

In Lieu of

The Old One,

By way of Suppoſition.

Or, A Satisfactory

ANSWER

To that Great and Common

QUESTION:

VIZ.

If the *Penal Laws* and *Teſts* ſhould be Aboliſhed, how ſhall the *Proteſtant Religion* and *Intereſt* be Secured?

By *G. S.*

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OR, A

Satisfactory ANSWER, &c.

I Should not have preſumed upon this ſo great an Undertaking, knowing my own Weakneſs; But ſeeing many People ſo much Diſſatisfied by reaſon of the Diſcourſe and Thoughts of Aboliſhing and Abrogating the *Penal Laws* and *Teſts*, becauſe they think that *no Law* can be Equivalent to them for our future Security——For that is the very next Queſtion that follows in courſe, when we talk of Aboliſhing the ſaid *Laws and Teſts*; *What Security* (ſay they) *can be given to the* Proteſtant Religion, *to keep us from being Over-run with POPERY?* So that a ſatisfactory Anſwer to this common Query, ſeems to be the main Thing that has been wanting, and is yet ſtill wanting. And therefore I thought it Conveni-

ent to cast in my Mite, If it may be accepted, though I am the most unworthy, and unfit for it——However, I would very gladly serve God and the King, and my Country also. If happily God may give his Blessing upon this rough-hewn Discourse, which is not garnished with Rhetorick, nor embellished with Learning and Parts. But there are some People in the World perhaps, that can understand this plain Talk, who cannot so well comprehend the high Notions of the Learned.

Therefore seeing his Majesty has been so Generous, and so Benignly kind, as to extend his Unparallell'd Clemency and Goodness unto us, not only in giving us this Free and General Toleration for every Man to serve God according to their several Perswasions; but also in his Fatherly Offer to his People, and Resolution in Himself to turn the said Liberty into a *Magna Charta*, which is to secure it unto us and our Posterity after his Majesty's Reign; and to put it out of the Power, Policy, and Interest of His Successors, ever to attempt the Alteration thereof.

And since I have (if I mistake not) found out an Old *Magna Charta* of about 2200 Years old, which (if his most Excellent Majesty and Two Houses of Parliament agree in it, (or somewhat equivalent to it) may fit and suit with our present Occasion and Purpose. Which I therefore humbly present unto your Serious Consideration; For what I have done, I have done to quiet and stir the Minds of those People that are willing to have the Question aforesaid answered in any measure, by way of Supposition; And also to prepare them for to choose Honest able Men to sit in Parliament, such as may be as willing to have all these Sinful Insnaring Laws and Tests Abolished, as his Majesty himself is; Which if they remain, now God hath detected them, and laid all that Mystery of Iniquity open to the face of the Sun, we may expect some dreadful Judgment to come upon us; For Reformation or Desolation will follow upon the great search that God hath made into these Abominations, *Isai.* 20. 1,2. *Psa.* 49.

In the first place then, My dear Countrymen! What is the matter with the Lowing of *the Oxen, and the Bleating of the Sheep in our Ears?* What is the matter that there is such an *Outcry* both in City and Country, especially by those whom Parson *Demetrius* mounts on the Blind-side with his great Gown full of *Fears and Jealousies*, Jer. 5. 31. and spurs them on so furiously, that

that he rides them out of their Senſes, and puts them into a Panick fear about parting with the ſinful *Penal Laws* and *Teſts*, and as great a Heat and Rage as thoſe Crafts-men were in, in St. *Paul's* time, *Acts* 21. 28. *Crying out, Men of Iſrael, help: This is the Man that teacheth all men every where againſt the People, and Law:* Acts 19. 25. 27. *Sirs, ye know that by this Craft we have our Wealth: So that not only this our Craft is in danger to be ſet at nought,* &c. Or like him that cried out, *They had ſtolen away his Gods,* Judg. 18. 24.

What is the reaſon, I ſay, that ſo many People are ſo much perplext about theſe *Penal Laws* and *Teſts*, for fear that thoſe Gate of Braſs, and thoſe barrs of Iron ſhould be broke in pieces, *And cut in ſunder by our Cyrus,* Iſa. 45. 1, 2.

The great Bugbear Reaſon for it, I find, is this; Say they, *If the* Penal Laws *and* Teſts *be Aboliſhed, there cannot be the* Like Expedient *for Security to the* Proteſtant Religion *found out and invented, eſpecially as that of the* Teſts, *which are of* 500 *Pounds value, and about Ten or Fifteen Years ſtanding; For if theſe Laws and Teſts ſhould be Aboliſhed, what Security can there be given to the* Proteſtant Religion, *to keep that from falling? How can any Law be made that ſhall prevent the Diſſolution of that Parliament that deſtroyed thoſe Laws and Teſts, and the Chooſing of a Popiſh Parliament, that will Aboliſh and Repeal all thoſe Laws that they ſhall make, though Incorporated in that very Bill of Abolition that is for our Security and Preſervation, and to bring in Popery, and ſet it up by Law?* &c.

This is the full force of the Objection; Now 'tis very ſtrange that one *Little Gentleman* could find out and invent ſuch a rare Expedient or Engine to Baracado the *Romaniſts* out of the Government, and alſo other *Teſts* that were Invented to keep out all other *Diſſenters* out of the Government in the moſt material parts of it, in caſe they would not firſt Abandon and Acquit their Profeſſion, or at leaſt do by their Religion as *Abraham* did by his Servants, when he went to Offer that Bloody Sacrifice as he thought; Stay you here (ſays he) while I go and *Sacrifice*, and I will come unto you again, *Gen.* 12. 5. So they Poſt-pon'd Religion and Conſcience. They muſt acquit their Profeſſion and become Members of their National Synagogue or Church (as they call it) though not comprehending a third of the Nation, before they could be admitted into the

Government; And cannot all the Wits of the Nation Assembled in Parliament, find out an Expedient or Way, to keep every Man within Bounds, that they shall not destroy one another, *Isai.* 65. 25.

I grant indeed, that there can be no Law made to prevent the Dissolution of the said Parliament, for that lieth in the King's Breast, and it would be an Infringment on his Prerogative. But what of all that? There may be Laws made and Incorporated into the very Body of the Bill of Abolition, that may prevent *a Popish Parliament* as much as *a Presbyterian Parliament* for ever being Chosen, unless the *Protestants* do Choose them themselves, that is, the most part of them. But yet there is a way to prevent them or any other, in case it should be so, as you shall hear by and by.

There may be Laws made that we need no more fear the *Papists* than the *Quakers*; nor the *Church of England men*, any more than the *Antipedobaptists*; nor the *Congregational Men*, than the *Presbyterians*; but all may agree and feed together in the Dish of the Civil Government, *Isai.* 65. 25. without molesting or disturbing one another, and every man injoy his own Perswasion, apart and distinct, from those that are not of the same apprehensions with him, seeing every man must give an account to God of *himself*; *Micha.* 4. 3, 4, 5. *And many Nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of* Jacob, *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: For the Law shall go forth of* Sion, *and the Word of the Lord from* Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among many People, and rebuke strong Nations afar off, and they shall beat their Swords into Plow-shares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks: Nation shall not lift up Sword against Nation, neither shall they Learn War *any more.*

But they shall sit every man under his Vine, and under his Fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid: For the Mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it.

But *Secondly*, I know the grand Plea is this; Namely, That there can be no Expedient found out like unto this Test of 500 Pound price, to keep the *Romanists* within Bounds, but that they will break out and become Rampant, and Usurp a Power and

and Dominion over our Conſciences, and trample all our Liberties and Priviledges under foot, both as Men and Chriſtians.

This would be ſad indeed, were it true; But I hope the Caſe is not altogether ſo deſperate. It would not become a Perſon of my mean condition to Preſcribe to the grand Council of the Nation, particular Schemes or Methods in ſo Important an Affair. But I may modeſtly crave leave to ſay, That in my humble Opinion, we have an excellent Preſident given above 2000 Years ago, and Recorded for our Inſtruction in Holy Scripture.

After *Cyrus*, by his Prerogative, had given the People of God, the *Jews*, their Liberty, he bid them get the ſame made into a *Magna Charta*; A Law made to ſecure them in it; Even as his preſent Gracious Majeſty does to all the Diſſenters of this day. And as *Cyrus* might be Typical of his Majeſty, and the Condition of the Captive *Jews* (the *Diſſenters* of that day) when King *Cyrus* came to the Crown, *Ezra* 1. 1, 2, 3, 4. might be a lively Type of our *Diſſenters* Captive, Miſerable ſtate, and that forlorn Condition his preſent Majeſty found them in when he came to the Crown, viz. *A People robbed and ſpoiled; they were all of them ſnared in Holes, and hid in Priſon-houſes; they were for a prey, and none delivered; for a ſpoil, and none ſaid, Reſtore*, Iſai. 42. 22.

Even ſo the Decrees for the Due Obſervation and Inviolable keeping of ſuch Liberty may likewiſe be Typical unto us alſo.

Now here is the Law and the Penalty annexed unto it, *Ezra* 6. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Let it be given them day by day without fail: That they may offer Sacrifices of ſweet Savours unto the God of Heaven, and pray for the Life of the* King *and of his Sons.*

Alſo I have made a Decree, *That whoſoever ſhall* ALTER THIS WORD, *Let Timber be pulled down from his Houſe, and being ſet up, Let him be* HANGED *thereon, and his Houſe be made a Dunghill for this.*

And the God that hath cauſed his Name to dwell there, Deſtroy all Kings and People that ſhall put to their hand to Alter *and to deſtroy this Houſe of God, which is at* Jeruſalem: *I* Darius *have made a Decree, Let it be done* with ſpeed.

Mark ye, The King required it to be done with ſpeed; therefore the more ſpeedy our King is in this Good Work which lyeth before him, the nearer he comes up in reſemblance unto this

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Great and Noble Prince; And the same is further backed and corroborated in *Ezra* 7. 26. *Whosoever will not do the* Law of thy God, *and the* Law of the King.

Mark, Here this King makes a Distinction between *Religion*, which is more particularly the *Law of God*, and the *Civil Government*, which he called the Law of the King; which sounds not much unlike that Exhortation of the Apostle St. *Peter*, *Fear God*, *Honour the King*. This Noble King here made a difference between the Laws of God, and the Laws of Man; Even as our most Generous Minded Prince has done in his Gracious *Declaration*. [But the *Church of England* are for *twisting* them together.]

Let Judgment be Executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto Death, or to Banishment, or to Confiscation of Goods, or to Imprisonment.

I think here are Laws sufficient to keep every man within his due Bounds, let him be of what Religion or Perswasion he will. And if the *Romanists* are now shy of coming into Offices or Places of Trust, for fear of running the hazard of forfeiting 500 Pounds, when there is no Death in that Pot, but only apprehensions of an After-reckoning; much more will such Dread to alter a Law or Laws that might be made after this manner, for the same Reason, when there should be *Death* in the Pot, and Confiscation of *Goods* to boot.

I told you I was not for Dictating to my Superiors; But since People are so eager in calling for Instances, I hope I may, without Offence, make two or three innocent Proposals, by way of Supposition, which in my poor conceit, when elaborated and digested into apt Form, and duely fenc'd with necessary Proviso's, might effectually secure all our Fears, or at least be a far better Guard for our Liberties, Religious, and Civil, than these Tests. For Example;

Suppose a Law were Made and Provided, That if any Sheriff or other Officer or Persons, to whom it belongs to return Members of Parliament, should make a false Return, That then the said Sheriff, or other Persons House or Houses, should be pulled down, and a Gallows should be made and erected of the Timber thereof, and the Sheriff or other Offenders so Convicted, Cast and Condemned, should be hanged thereon; and his or their House or Houses be made a Dunghill, and all his Estate

ſtate in Lands, Houſes, Goods or Chattles, to be forfeited to the Poor of the ſaid County or Corporation where the Crime aforeſaid was committed; and all this without any Reprieve, Pardon, *Noli Proſequi*, or Benefit of the Clergy, in this great Emergency; And alſo that the ſaid Perſon or Perſons ſo unduely Returned, if it be done with their privity, to undergo the like Penalty, for accepting of it, and for that he himſelf did not look to it to prevent it, by ſeeing that himſelf was duly Elected and legally Choſen; and both theſe to be tryed in the County or Corporation where the Fact was committed, and he or they that was legally Choſen to ſit in the Parliament Houſe.

Secondly, That in caſe any Perſon or Perſons ſhall be found guilty of giving Bribes to the People to purchaſe their Votes in favour of any, that they might be choſen Parliament Men, either in Meat, Drink, or Moneys, or Moneys-worth, in Cloathing, or any other kind of Goods or Chattels; or to uſe any kind of Arts or Tricks by Promiſes from them, or by others hands, of what they will do for them, or the like; then the ſaid Party ſo found guilty of giving Bribes in Manner and Form aforeſaid, ſhould have a ſevere Puniſhment inflicted upon him and them ſo offending: And alſo all they that ſhould be found guilty of receiving of any Bribes upon this account, ſhould be ſeverely puniſhed both in Body and Purſe, and rendred uncapable thereby, ever to have a Vote in chooſing of Members of Parliament again, for this is near of kin to, and almoſt as bad as the making a falſe Return is; and therefore their puniſhment ought to be accordingly in proportion; And this would wonderfully prevent all fraudulent undue Elections, which have been a very great Evil among us.

2. Suppoſe further, That it ſhould be further Provided, That the Criminals ſhould not be tryed in the Parliament Houſe, nor by the Parliament, leſt the major part of them ſhould be ſo unduely choſen themſelves; but by ſome other ways or means, in the ſame County where the ſaid Offence was committed; with an Act of Parliament to appoint how, and by whom they ſhould be tryed, to prevent packt Juries, and Corrupt Judges and Judgment in the ſaid Tryal.

Thirdly, That in case any Member in Parliament, whether Lord or Commoner, that should but so much as Move or Mention any thing in the House, or out of the House of Parliament, that may tend to the Violating or Altering of the said Liberty and Property of the Subject, in point of *Liberty of Conscience* in Matters of meer Religion; or that should but Attempt the breaking in upon one anothers Rights and Priviledges in this kind, should undergo the same Penalty as was proposed to be inflicted on the Sheriff aforesaid in case of a false Return.

Fourthly, In case any Person or Persons should attempt to set up one Party above another, by Violating the said *Magna Charta*, in this case let them also undergo the same punishment.

Fifthly, In case any other Parties out of the House, whether Lord or Commoner, Spiritual or Temporal, in whatsoever capacity, shall Conspire or Endeavour the Alteration of the said *Magna Charta*, this being proved upon him or them, then the said Party or Parties so found guilty, should undergo the same punishment with the guilty Sheriff aforesaid, or with King *Darius*'s Decree, *Ezra.* 6. 12. *And the God that has caused his Name to dwell there, destroy all Kings and People that shall put to their hand to Alter and Destroy this House of God which is at* Jerusalem: *I* Darius *have made a Decree, Let it be done with speed.*

Mark how hearty this Noble Prince was in this, though of another Religion quite different from the *Jews*, yet he took care that the Law for their Religious Liberty should be so established, that his Successours should not alter it without danger of their own Destruction.

Now such a Law to us would be more Efficacious than a Sinful Test of Five hundred Pounds price, where there is nothing Capital in the case; for as the Devil said to *Job*, *Skin for skin, and all that a Man hath, will he give for his Life*, Job 2. 4.

Sixthly, Suppose there were a severe Law made against *Perjury*,——(which has been one main Engine whereunto we owe much of our Misery) That if any Person or Persons were found guilty of corrupt wilful *Perjury* against any Person or Persons, then whatsoever Damage this Perjured Person or Persons false Oath

Oath would have brought upon the Innocent ſo Sworn againſt, the ſame ſhould be inflicted or executed upon the ſaid Perjured Perſon, whether it was for Life, or Liberty, or Eſtate, or part thereof, as Moneys, or any other part of his, or her, or their Eſtate; and if they were Poor, then to undergo ſome ſevere Corporal puniſhment; And if in caſe his, or her, or their falſe Oath would have brought Impriſonment upon them, him, or her, then to be Impriſoned. And in like manner, in the caſe of any other *Perjury* or *Subornation*.

This would mightily prevent, for the future, the Effuſion of much Innocent Blood, and the Ruine and Deſtruction of many Perſons and Families. The Laws that are in Being againſt that Helliſh Practice of *Perjury*, are not ſufficient to deter them from that Abomination, as woful Experience can witneſs, in multitudes of ſad Inſtances that might be produced of late Years.

Seventhly, Suppoſe there was a Law made, That every Parliament man, whether Peer or Commoner, ſhould take an Oath for the future, every time they are Choſen, Called, and Convened together to ſit in the Houſe; And alſo that it ſhould be Enacted, That all Parliament men for the future, ſhould take the ſame Oath upon their entring the Houſe, Solemnly and Inviolably to Maintain the ſaid *Magna Charta* that his preſent Majeſty and his two Houſes of Parliament ſhall agree upon to make, in every part of it, without any Alteration that might be to the Prejudice or Diſadvantage of the whole Body Politick of the Nation. And in Caſe they did not take the ſaid Oath aforeſaid to maintain the ſaid *Magna Charta*, then he or they thus Refuſing, ſhould be Expelled the Houſe: And not be permitted to Sit in the *Parliament Houſe*, and others Choſen in their Room by Warrant from the Speaker; And this to be Regiſtred. And if by any Artifice any Member or Members in either Houſe ſhould preſume to Sit in Parliament without being thus Duely and Legally qualified; then the Perſon or Perſons ſo Guilty, ſhould undergo the ſame Puniſhment as the Sheriff ſhould in the Caſe of a falſe Return: And to have all theſe Penalties Executed upon them, without the Benefit of Reprieve or Pardon, or the Benefit of Clergy.

Eighthly and *Lastly*; Suppose there was an Act of Parliament made for the better Security of this *Magna Charta*, That all Men at the Age of twenty years and upwards throughout the whole Nation, of all Perswasions whose Principles it is to take *An Oath*,——that they should swear that they would duly and truly observe and keep Unviolable, according to the best of their Skill and Power, this new *Magna Charta*. And those whose Consciences will not permit them to take a Formal Oath, and whose Principles are known to be such, should ingage solemnly by Subscription to do the same: And this to be done once every year, and that on his present Majesties Birth-Day, for a Memorial of Him, and of his Noble and Generous Act in restoring the *Empire of Conscience*, that was so long Invaded and Captivated by the Sons of *Belial*: And all these new Provisions that shall be made for the Security of this Liberty, to be Incorporated into the very Body of the Act for Abolition of the Penal Laws and Tests. Would not this make all People careful to keep close to the Golden Rule of *Doing to others, as they would be done by?* And then there need be no sinful Tests to keep any party out of the Government, which is their Birth-right, if chosen by the People. This would be a sufficient Test to keep every party within Bounds: It would put such a Dread and Awe upon them, that they would not even dare to Attempt to break through these Thorny Hedges into one anothers Ground, to Violate these Laws that would look so Black and Grim upon them. And this would, I humbly conceive, effectually prevent Popery and Prelacy for ever getting uppermost, to be Rampant over us: But let every Man act in his own Province or Station, and let all Men stand upon even Ground one with another in the Civil Government, and let us all be subject to the Higher Powers, *Rom.* 13. 1, 2, 3, 4. And let *every Man be perswaded in his own Mind*, and let not one Subject be a Tyrant or tormenting Incarnate Devil to another; And let not one Neighbour Bite and Devour another, and Domineer and Lord it over another Mans Faith and Conscience, 1 *Peter* 5. 2, 3. 2 *Cor.* 1. 34. But let us all serve the Lord according to the best Light and Knowledge that God hath given us; And let the *Tares* grow with the *Wheat* until the *Great Harvest*. And let us Honour all Men, Love the Brother-hood, fear God, Honour the King, 1 *Peter* 2. 17.

Again,

Again, we must not do evil that good may come on it, though it were to save the whole World, no more than we must continue in Sin, that Grace may Abound: But we must keep strictly and close to the Golden Rule of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; Which he himself hath prescribed for all true Christians to walk by, namely this: *Whatsoever we would that other Men should do unto us, to do even so unto them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.* ——— Why now if we would not that other Men should make Laws against our own Principles, nor Fetter and Shackle our own Consciences; And deprive us of our own Birth-Rights.——Why then by the same parity of Reason we ought not to have any such Laws in being, that are against other Mens Principles, and Consciences, and Birth-Rights, in matters of Religion; But leave them to God, and take some other lawful Christian Measures for the Security and Preservation of the Protestant Interest and Religion. For if these Laws and Tests were good in themselves, why then it would follow necessarily that all good Men, as well as others, were obliged to observe and obey them: But I never knew any serious good Man, that ever made the least scruple of Conscience of Breaking and Violating of them; or for their Nonconformity to them, either Living nor Dying, any more than the three Children did, when they were thrown into the Fiery Furnace, nor *Daniel* when he was thrown into the Lions Den for their Nonconformity unto those Cruel Laws that were made against them in that Day. ——— But always the most sincere, Upright Godly Persons, have been the greatest Transgressors, and the most Guilty of Violating all these kind of Laws.——— Indeed many through a base, Servile, Slavish, fearful frame of Heart, have complyed with them Hypocritically, to save their Bacon, as we use to say of such kind of practices: And some have been troubled in their Consciences afterwards, for so doing: Nay, we are not without a sad Instance of one *J. C.* who complyed with them, and Conformed unto them: And writ a Book against his Brethren the Dissenters, and God let loose his Conscience upon him, and he lay some time under Dreadful Horror of Conscience, and at last made away with himself; of which sad Story, there is a Collection made, that will appear in Print: and many other sad and sudden strange Ends of others

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that have dyed in a Miserable Condition. And therefore assuredly these Laws and Tests cannot be good: But are extreamly Sinful in themselves.

Now if this be so, as you see it is clearly proved; Then how dare any Man be so hardy, and make so bold with the Omnipotent, All-wise, faithful, holy, heart-searching God, who is of purer Eyes then to behold Iniquity with any Approbation thereunto, as to be Sticklers and Advocates for these sinful Laws and Tests, which are essentially sinful in themselves? O be perswaded to take the Ballance of the Sanctuary, and weigh all these Laws and Tests in it. And I am sure you will find them all lighter then vanity. Let them trust in Laws and Tests that have not a God to trust in. ——— And be perswaded to make Gods Word your only Rule, and his Glory your End and Aym; let the event be what it will: *For the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgement to be punished,* 2 *Peter* 2. 9. For a Spirit of Persecution is a true Badge, and an Infallible Mark and Character of Antichristianism.—— Which persecuting Spirit descended down from the Heathen Beast, *Rev.* 17. 8. 11. It is an Image of that Beast, let it be who it will that makes use of it. ——— And all those sinful Laws and Tests that are made to force the Conscience of persons in the matter of Religion and Worship, is that which gives Life to the Image of the said Beast, *Rev.* 13. 36. For as the Spirit of God by the still Voice does deal with the Consciences of Men, and Convince, and Convert, and Over-come, and Influence them, and Uphold, and Support all True, Rightly-Constituted, Gospel-Churches by the holy Law of God, which is prescribed unto us in his holy Gospel, *Mat.* 16. 18. *Ephes.* 2. 19, 20, 21, 22. *Zech.* 4. 6. 7. *Zech.* 2. 5. 7, 8. *Zech.* 9. 8. Why so, to measure by the Rule of Contraries, these Persecutors they do over-come and conquer persons, and lay a force upon their Consciences, and pervert them by the Influence of the Spirit of the Beast; And are upheld in Acts of Violence by sinful Laws and Tests, which gives Life to the Image of the Beast, and to make lies their Refuge. *Isa.* 28. 15, 17, 18, 21: How many thousands of Persons and Families have there been ruined and undone, within this twenty years last past, by these unrighteous Laws which they made

made to be their Church-Tests, to Insnare Mens Consciences by? They had variety of them suited to every differing Opinion or Perswasion almost, so that if one mist, another might be sure to hit; And by them sort of Persons, all these Laws have been procured and executed upon all sorts of Dissenters, tho they fathered them upon the King's Majesty; and therefore gave them the Title of the Kings Laws, *Isa.* 41. to put the better gloss upon them; when as indeed they might be more properly called the Lord Bishops Laws: ——— And yet notwithstanding they are now troubled, because his gracious Majesty hath laid his Ax to the Root of them all, to cut them down.———And if they be the Kings Laws, why should not the King do what he pleases with his own?———But I find they would fain have the Kings Majesty only to be God-father to this un-godly Child; For his Majesty cannot be the true Father of it, no more then the Woman was the true Mother of the Child, that was for dividing of it; when King *Solomon* by his Wisdom gave that trying Judgment to have the Child divided between them, to find out who of them was the true Mother, because both of them did lay claim to it. Therefore they that are not for the taking off, and Abolishing of all these Laws and Tests, are the true Fathers of them. And I do think it is as much the duty of all good Men, now to bear a Testimony against them that are against the taking off and Abolishing of these sinful Penal Laws and Tests, as it was formerly to bear a Testimony against the Executioners of them.

A few hours since, an Acquaintance of mine who came lately from the *East Indies*, told me, That there are 88 several Casts of persons, under the Government of the Great *Mogull*; that is, 88 several Sects or Opinions: And yet notwithstanding, they do all agree together very well, as to that point, and they do not Persecute, or Molest, or meddle one with the others Perswasion or Opinion in that way and manner: But are all subject to the higher Powers, and the Government takes no notice of their several Opinions or Casts, one more then another. But the powers are equally extended alike to all, for their Safety and Protection: Which may give a *tacit Rebuke*, and put to shame all the wild Beasts of the *Isles*: *Isa.* 34. 14. Those Bulls of *Bashan*, who are never so well satisfied, as when they are Rampant

with

with the Whip in their hand, and a biting, devouring, and goaring their Fellow-ſubjects that are not of their Opinion.

Can the Ethiopian *change his Skin? or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye alſo do Good, that are accuſtomed to do Evil,* Jer. 13. 23. *But the hand of the Lord is lifted up againſt the ſpirit of Envy and Perſecution,* by his Majeſty's Gracious Declaration for Liberty; Aſſerting, *That Conſcience ought not to be reſtrained in Matters of Meer Religion:* And in His firm, unſhaken, fixt Reſolution to Maintain and Perpetuate the ſame, by Forming it into a *MAGNA CHARTA,* in Concurence with His Two Houſes of Parliament: Which is a Greater and more Honourable Undertaking than that of *Alexander the Great's* Conquering the whole World; *For what ſhall it profit a Man to gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* But though the Perſecutors will not ſee the hand of God lifted up againſt them, *Yet they ſhall ſee, and be aſhamed for their Envy at the People.* Iſai. 26. 11. *Thy Sons have fainted, they lye at the head of all the Streets, as a wild Bull in a Net: They are full of the fury of the Lord, the Rubuke of thy God,* But bleſſed be God they have no vent for it; But as Fury was formerly their Sin, now God has made it their Judgment and Puniſhment; We may read the Will and Mind of God in his Vicegerents Gracious Declaration, and fixt Reſolution; it is written in Capital Letters, ſo that he that runneth may Read; For *where the Word of a King is, there is Power; The Wrath of a King is as the roaring of a Lion: Whoſo provoketh him to Anger, ſinneth againſt his own Soul: A WISE KING ſcattereth the Wicked, and bringeth the Wheel over them,* Prov. 20. 2, 26. *Caſt out the Scorner, and Contention ſhall go out; Yea, Strife and Reproach ſhall ceaſe.* The ſame Advice that is given to Kings and Rulers in *Pſal.* 2. 10, 11, 12. may be applicable to the People in this caſe, eſpecially to all them which are yet of a Perſecuting Spirit. *viz. Be wiſe now therefore, O ye People: And be* ye *inſtructed* All ye Inhabitants of *England: Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoyce with trembling: Kiſs the SON, leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way; When his wrath is kindled but a little, Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him.*

But

But some will object and say, why do you call this Parliamentary Test sinful, that is principally against the Romanists?

I will answer this Objection with the Close of this Head.

First, There was a Parliamentary Test before, as I take it; which was this, *viz.* That all the Members in Parliament must receive the Sacrament according to the Church of *England*, within so many Months next after they sit in the House. But they thought that was not sufficient to keep out the *Romanists* from sitting in the House, and therefore they invented this Additional Test, and tackt it on to the former, which alone makes it sinful; besides that of not doing, as we would be done by; the making that Sacred Religious Ordinance a Test, and Incorporating it with the other: And so they made it a two-edged-Sword, to cut forward and backward with, the first part was to cut the Protestant Dissenters withall, and the second part was to cut the *Romanists* withall; and therefore being thus Incorporated, and tending both to one and the same end, it becomes sinful. But though they are tackt together, yet the stitches are so wide, that Protestant Dissenters may come into the House, and destroy the former with the latter, before the former comes to be in force upon them; they may destroy the unclean Bird in the Egg, before ever it cometh to be Hatcht.

It is observable, that within these twenty Years, in which time many of these Penal Laws and Tests have been made; especially that Test which was made against the *Roman* Dissenters, that they have gotten more Ground and Advantage then ever they got before, since Queen *Mary*'s Days: And therefore it did not answer the end and design, for which it was made and invented in an especial manner; and tho it did not answer their Expectation, yet now they Stickle for the continuance of it; which is like the stoping of the Bung of a Cask, when the Head is out.

And on the other hand, the Protestant Dissenters have been infinitely worse treated since these Penal Laws and Tests were made, then ever they were before. And especially since the said Test against the *Romanists* was made; for it was never

of any Use or Advantage unto them. But on the contrary did strengthen the hands of their Enemies, in Acts of Violence against them: And therefore I know no reason at all, that the Dissenters should be troubled, if his Gracious Majesty with his two Houses of Parliament should Abolish them all; for as we say, As good never a whit, as never the better.

For if this Parliamentary Test it self be not sinful, I am sure it comes very near; for it is tackt on to one that is so essentially by their Profanation, which is the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, which was never instituted nor intended for any such base low Secular end. *Matt.* 16. 26, 27, 28. —— *Mar.* 14, 22, 23, 24. *Luke* 22. 19, 20. 1 *Cor.* 11. 13, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. And as our Saviour saith in another case, *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* It is very difficult for an honest Man to keep company with a Thief, or High-way-Man, both at Bed and at Board continually, and yet not be tainted: Men are many times known by the company they keep: ——So that if this one particular Test, above all the rest, can be cleared of the sin of not doing as we would be done by: Yet it is very unequally yoked, at the best that can be made on it.

In the next and *Last place*, Let us a little enquire into the Nature and Use of these *Penal Laws* and *Tests* that People are so fond of, and do lay such Stress upon, and so much Idolize and Dote upon, and are so loath, so very loath to part with.

First, All these *Spiritual Penal Laws* and *Tests*, that are meerly in Matters of Religion and Conscience, of Mens Inventing and Making, are Just and Equal, and so to be Obeyed and Observed; or they are Wicked and Sinful, and so to be Rejected and Condemned; there is no *medium* between; there is no Indifferency or Neutrality in this Point, because they are relating to the government of Conscience in the matters of Worshipping of God.

Now if they be Just and Good, why do any good Men find fault with them and dislike them? And why have any good Men exposed themselves and their Estates to the Rigor of them, and suffer themselves to be ruined and undone by them? But if they be Evil, why do any Comply with them, and plead for the Continuance of them, which is, *To continue in Sin, that Grace may abound?*

But

But if these Laws be Evil in themselves, as certainly they are, Why then, whoever stickles or pleads for the Continuance of them, do stickle and plead for, and are Advocates for Sin and Iniquity? And shall any good Man even dare to be an Advocate for Sin? But it must be thus, *viz.* That either the Man thinks himself Good when he is not so, or else Lusts and Unbelief have so blinded his Eyes, that he cannot see into these sinful Laws as he ought to do. Pray look into *Isa.* 10. 1, 2. and into *Psal.* 94. 20. and ponder it well in your Hearts, and consider whether the Laws mentioned in these Scriptures be not sinful, and whether they have not the very same Image and Superscription upon them, as our Spiritual Penal Laws have?

Now I say, If those Laws be not sinful, then is not the *Spiritual Penal Humane Laws and Tests of England* Sinful and Unjust. But if they be Unrighteous and Sinful, as I will appeal to all the World to judge of them,——then I do in the Name and fear of God, Declare, That all those *Penal Laws* and *Tests* that relates meerly to Religion and Mens Consciences about *Spiritual Worship*, are sinful in the highest degree, because they do Usurp that Power and Authority to themselves which God never gave nor allowed to Man: It is to mount the Throne of God, and become *Spiritual Legislators*, or *Lawmakers* to their fellow Creatures, which is God's Prerogative only, 2 *Corinth.* 1. 24. 1 *Pet.* 5. 1, 2, 3. And what good Man even dare to lift up a hand for the continuation of such Laws as these are, or so much as have a favourable Thought of them, when they are essentially Sinful in themselves, as is clearly proved from Scripture, and from Reason and Experience.

Secondly, As for the Laws themselves, What are they? Why they are the Laws of the Land (say they.) And therefore to be Observed. To which I shall say more by and by. But,

Thirdly, What is the End of all *Humane Laws?* It is, or ought to be for the *Good* and *Weal* of Mankind. It is for the good of the Outward-man principally; which Publick Outward Good, all the Body Politick do or ought to partake of. It is for the good of Humane Society, and separate and distinct

from Religion, as Noble King *Darius* well observed in *Ezra* 7.26. in these Words; *And whosoever will not do the Law of thy God, And the Law of the King!* He makes it two distinct things, as indeed they are; And that Exhortation of the Apostle St. *Peter*, is somewhat corroborating to this, in them words, *Fear God*; that is, to keep God's Law; *Honour the King*, that is, to Obey the Righteous Civil Laws, and the King's most Excellent Majesty's Declaration. [There these two Church-of-E's. Monstrous *Twins*, are untwisted; And his Majesty makes a clear distinction between the Laws of God, and the Laws of Man] for the *Religious Laws of God*, and the *Civil Laws of the Land*, are two different things; the one respects the Inward Man, and the Outward Man also; But the Civil Laws of a Nation ought principally to respect the Outward Man; but the Law of God ought to be the Rule for all the Laws of Men.

But say they, It is the Law of the Land, and therefore binding. But are all *Humane Laws* essentially Good and Justifiable in themselves? To this I answer in the *Negative*, That all *Humane Laws* are not essentially Good and Justifiable in themselves; which is as clear as the Sun, For the greatest Wickedness in the world (though God made it the greatest Good) was done by *a Law*; which was the Murdering and Crucifying of Our Lord *Jesus Christ*; the *Jews* could boast and say, *We have a Law, and by our Law this Man ought to dye.* So that if you will Justifie all *Humane Laws*, you must Justifie that Law by which our Saviour *Christ* was Condemned and put to Death. Nay, To Justifie any Laws that are made against Mens Consciences in matters of meer Religion, is to Justifie those very Laws by which the *Jews* Tryed and Condemned, and put our Blessed Saviour *Christ* to Death, for they were all made by Men of one and the same Spirit.

Now if any Law that is made be Destructive to Mens Liberties and Estates in point of Conscience, in matters of meer Religion, such Laws are Void and Null in themselves; and those who have executed them, are liable to be called to account, and to be punished for the same; as we are not without several Presidents upon Record of the same. And I will not speak any thing more then what I will prove by clear Scripture, as well as otherwise; *viz.* That all Laws are not Essentially good, and justifiable

able in themselves; And I will produce you a Law in Scripture, as like unto our *Conventicle Laws*, as can be, if not spoken prophetically of them; which I am apt to believe it was. *Isa.* 10. 1, 2. *Wo unto them that Decree unrighteous Decrees, and that write Grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from Judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my People; that Widows might be their Prey.* These *Widows* I take to be *Churches*, which the Magistrates that ought to have been Gods Representatives, and so the Churches Husband, did not *own*, but forsook; as he that leaves his *own* chaste Wife, and follows *Harlots*: And that they may *Rob the Fatherless*; these Fatherless, I take to be the People of God, that were *Fatherless* with a Respect to the *Magistrates*, who are the Political Fathers of a Nation or People: These Laws are of the very Complection with our Spiritual Penal Laws. These be the Gates of Brass, that are broke in pieces, and the Bars of Iron that were cut in sunder by the Kings Declaration, for Liberty of Conscience; when God loosed the Loins of our King, to open the two-leaved Gates, which can never be shut. *Isa.* 45. 1, 2.

Again, These Laws and Tests are that which giveth life to the Image of the Beast, as being of a sinful *Beastlike Nature*: Rev. 13. 15. *And he had power to give life unto the Image of the Beast, that the Image of the Beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not Worship the Image of the Beast, should be killed.* It is sinful Penal Laws and Tests, that gives life to a *false Worship*, which is the Image of the Beast, which appeared in the Heathen Idolaters, in the ten Persecutions, and is descended down upon those that call themselves *Christians*, let them be of what sort they will if they be Persecutors; for nothing bespeaks a Church or Worship to be false and Heathenish, more exactly then a Spirit of Persecution does; for as a true and pure Worship depends upon God for Succour, and Support, and Protection; even so a false Worship depends upon Human force and Laws for Succour, Support, and Protection: And as God by his Spirit gives life to the pure Spiritual Gospel Worship; So the Devil by his Spirit gives life to a false Worship. If a false Religion can but twist it self into the Civil Government, then it is as safe as a thief in a Mill. *Psal* 94. 20, 21, 22. *Shall the Throne of of Iniquity have fellowship with thee,*

thee, which frameth mischief by a Law? They gather themselves against the Soul of the Righteous, and condemn the innocent Blood. But the Lord is my Defence: And my God is the the Rock of my Refuge. ——Where-ever God permits the Devil to set up a false Worship, for the most part there he also suffers them to set up *a Fiery Furnace* for all the Nonconformists thereunto. *Dan.* 3. 15, 16, 17. And further in the 94th Psa. 3, 4, 5. *Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked Triumph? How long shall they utter, and speak hard things? And all the workers of Iniquity boast themselves? They break in pieces thy People, O Lord: And afflict thine Heritage. They slay the Widow and the Stranger; And Murther the Fatherless. Yet they say, The Lord shall not see: Neither shall the God of* Jacob *regard it. Isa.* 61. 8. *For I the Lord love Judgment, I hate robbery for Burnt-offering.* Prov. 21. 7. Thus you see these sinful *Penal Laws* are against God's Righteous Just *Peaceable Laws*, and are Stigmatized with the black Brand of Hell, namely Robbery, or framing of *Mischief by a Law.*

But *Secondly*, Let us also see and take notice how Inconsistent and Contradictory *Spiritual Penal Laws* are to the Fundamental Laws of the Land: I shall Instance but in two, though many more might be produced.

First, The Law of the Land, as well as the Law of God, *Exodus* 20. 8, 9, 10. does lay every Man under an Obligation of a strict and due Observation and Sanctifying and Keeping holy the Sabbath, or Lord's-day, namely the first Day of the Week, which is the Christian Sabbath. And it is principally the Magistrates work and duty to look after it, and see that it be duly performed and done, *Jer.* 17. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27. *Neh.* 13. 18, 19, 20, 21, 23. The Law of the Land saith, That no Warrant shall be Granted or Served on the Lord's-day, nor any Person Arrested on that Day, save in the case of *Treason, Fellony*, or breaking of the *Peace*. But these Unrighteous *Conventicle-Laws*, does Command, Require, and Oblige the Magistrates and Others, to Violate and Profane the Lord's Day, by giving or granting out Warrants thereon, or else they must forfeit a Hundred Pounds; [And others must serve them on that Day, or suffer] And they did commonly persecute and disturb

disturb Religious Meetings and Worship on that Day, and pulled and haled the Dissenters before the Magistrates, and Committed them to Prison, only upon the account of meer matters of Religion and Conscience; And thus they Profaned the *Lord's Day*, which was all contrary to the Fundamental Law of the Land, and also to the very essence of a Magistrate, a main part of whose Office it is to take care that the Sabbath be Sanctified and kept Holy, *Exod.* 20. 17. *Jer.* 19. 30, 21, 22. *Neh.* 13. 18.

Secondly, To name no more; The Fundamental Laws of the Land, does admit of no Man's being Convicted and Condemned, or to have his Goods seized on and taken from him, before there be an open *Tryal*, and the Party that is sued, have his Adversary or Plaintiff come in open Court and produce good sufficient Witnesses that are not Parties concerned by Interest, and there to have a fair Tryal by at least Twelve of his Neighbours [or Peers] and they to Judge of the Cause. But these Unrighteous Laws that were made against the Dissenters in the case of Religious Worship and Conscience, did Impower the worst and profanest of Men, like them of old in *Acts* 17. 5, 6, 7. to do this Druggery, *viz.* To go before a Magistrate, and Swear that there was a *Meeting* at such a Time, at such a Place, and such a Man Preach'd or Prayed contrary to the *Liturgy* of the Church of *England*; Or that it was a Person unknown to them, and such and such Persons were there a hearing: And upon their swearing this, Right or Wrong, whether they were there or not there, if these two Honourable *Knights of the Post* did but kiss the Book, though it was as false as the holy Evangelists which they swore by are true, yet it was sufficient, and past for currant Conviction; and if able, he must pay his part for the Offence of the unknown *stranger*, who so Preached or Prayed.

Thus they were Convicted and Condemned, and Warrants given out to make Distress upon his or their Goods, before ever they have known any thing of it, and it may be the whole Prosecution has been upon false grounds, every bit on't; And yet still the Remedy in this Case, was almost as bad as the Disease.

And

And is not this (with abundance more such like Unequal Things) a most Pernicious Law? And shall any Person or Persons that have but a grain of Sense, and but half as much Honesty in them, be troubled for (or but so much as in the least offer to Oppose) the Repealing of them, and the for ever Abolishing and Damning all such Laws as these are, which are contrary to the Law of God, and the Law and Light of Nature, and contrery to the Righteous Fundamental Laws of the Land? For the Law of the Land is against Robbing and Stealing, but these *Conventicle Penal Statutes*, with the rest of the Spiritual Laws of that stamp, are for Robbing and Stealing; and those are the worst sort of *Thieves* that are *Legal Thieves*, that *Rob by Law*, *Isai.* 10. 1, 2. Locks, Boults and Barrs, and also *Watching*, will not prevent them, whereas it will all other sort of Thieves; but these Thieves did Rob at Noon-day: And I do not see, but all those Magistrates that were Sworn to execute all these Laws of the Land, both one and the other, must of necessity be Forsworn, for in Swearing he will Obey and Execute one part of the Law, at the same time he Swore he would Break the other——If a Magistrate did Swear to put the *Penal Laws* in Execution against *Dissenters*, then he swore Tacitely and Consequentially, that he would Profane and Violate the *Lords Day*, because that was the chief and principal Day for the Exercise and Performance of Religious Duties and Worship towards God.

And if he swore to give out Warrants to seise upon Peoples Goods, upon the Evidence of two persons interested in the Booty, then he or they Violated the Fundamental Law of the Land aforesaid, that provideth that a Man shall and ought to be tryed by *twelve* honest unprejudiced, uninterested Men at least, of the *Vicinage*, or his *Neighbours*; And also the Witnesses to be persons that have no Interest in the Concern that is sued for;——For the Law of the Land allows no person to be Witness in, or Judges of, his or their own Cause.——And so these Magistrates did (in my Opinion) run an hazard of being forsworn,——and in case they did not Prosecute the Dissenters, why then they were forswore also; for it was impossible for a Magistrate to keep his Oath, though he was as wicked and bloodily precise, as *Herod* was, that would cut off St. *John*

the

the Baptists Head, rather then he would be forsworn, for in the fulfilling one part of the Law, they must of necessity break and violate the other in their very Act of Obedience.

And are these *Dilemma-Statutes*, these *Dagger-Acts*, these *Contradictions in Terminis*, the Laws that Uphold the Church of *England*, which they so much Boast of, and put so much Trust in, and are so loth to part with? If so, then certainly we may say with the Prophet, *Jer.* 7. 8, 9, 10, 11. *Behold, ye trust in Lying Words, that cannot profit. Will ye Steal, Murder, and commit Adultery, and Swear falsly, and burn Incense unto Baal, and walk after other Gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before me, in this house which is called by my Name, and say, We are delivered to do all these Abominations? Is this House, which is called by my Name, become a Den of Robbers in your eyes? Behold, I have seen it, saith the Lord.* Prov. 21. 7.

O Sirs, Is the loss of such Unrighteous Laws as these, that are detected and born Witness against from Heaven, both by God's Word and Providence, and the Law and Light of Nature, and the Fundamental Laws of the Land, worth so many aking Hearts? And so many pensive Thoughts? And so much Contention about?

I do much admire how any Man of Sense and Sobriety, that has the exercise of Reason, can ever speak a word in favour of any such kind of Laws, which is tacitely at the same time to Justifie the *Spanish Inquisition!* which all Sober Persons do Condemn; nay, some of the *Romanists* themselves have Condemned it.

O Sirs! If *England* lay under the guilt of no other Sin but this, namely, of these Persecuting *Penal Laws in Matters of meer Religion and Conscience*, it was enough to provoke God to bring all the Plagues of *Egypt* upon us.

And therefore as His Majesty is the Supreme Magistrate under God, it is his Duty to purge the Land of such horrible Iniquity as this is: To have a Law in Being to break the Sabbath! Away with it! *Jer.* 17. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27. *Neh.* 13. 18. There you see it is the King's duty to look after the Sabbath, to see that it be Sanctified and kept Holy; And how can the King do this, while there is a Law in Being to Violate it? Though blessed be God, He hath Abrogated it, and

Abolished it, as much as in Him lay, by His Prerogative; and Wo be to them where it sticks next. Is there a *Wo* pronounced against them that made them? *Isai.* 10. 1, 2. Why then also there is a *Wo* that will come upon all them that are for the Continuing of them; these wicked Laws will not go long unpunished without speedy and unfeigned Repentance.

O Sirs! I Beseech ye consider of this, and joyn Heart and Hand with his most Excellent Majesty, in Repealing and Abolishing of all these sinful Laws, that you may prevent the Judgments which the Continuance of them will certainly pull down upon our heads. For mark ye, When God does discover the Iniquity of a People to the face of the Sun, in detecting of it, then certainly Reformation, or utter Destruction, is very neat unto such a People, or Nation, and will come unavoidably.

But it may be some will say, We are willing to part with these *Penal Laws*, provided we may but keep the *Tests*. And therefore as we have seen a little of the nature of the *Penal Laws*, so I will a little look into the Nature and Tendency of the *Tests* also, which is the next thing.

AND *First*, What are these *TESTS* which there is so much Stir about, and Perplexity in the Thoughts of People, about the parting with them? Why these *Tests* are as nearly Related to the Sinful *Penal Statutes* aforesaid, as a Wicked Inn-keeper is to Highway-men, or Robbers, which he entertains at his House, and supplies them with all Necessaries, and shares with them in the Booty, and takes a Sally with them, and is a *Refuge* unto them; he encourageth them in all their Theft and Murder, and entertains them, and ministers Relief unto them: Why even so do the *Tests* to the *Penal Laws*. Or it is their Royal Fort or Garison that secures them in all their Ravageing and Spoiling that they make upon People. The *Tests* are like a strong impregnable Castle or Garison of *Free-Booters* in the midst of honest Men; Nay, give me leave to tell you, That the *Tests* are Thieves themselves, as much as People Dote upon them, or Deifie them, or make a God of them; For I am sure it is no breach of Charity to Assert, That many thousands of

of People do put more Trust and Confidence in *these Tests*, than they do in the True and Living *God*: For say they, If the *Tests goes*, *All goes*, and the *Protestant Religion* will fall to the ground and be lost. And pray what is that, but to make a God of the *Test*, and place the Inventions of Men in the room of *Christ*, who hath said in *Matt.* 16. 18. *And upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

So that I say, The *Tests* are Thieves and Robbers themselves, as well as the *Penal Laws*, as many times these wicked Inkeepers are, that entertain Thieves and Highway-men.

The *Tests* are Thieves and Robbers two ways especially.

First, They rob Persons either of their Birth-right; Or *Secondly*, Of their Religion and Conscience.

First, They rob men of their Birth-right; For if you will not do so and so, then you are Excluded from having any Part or Lot in the Government, which you are Born unto by Inheritance in Common with other Men, or a Peer that is born unto it, and yet they have no more Priviledge in that point, than a *Dutchman* or a *Spaniard*, that is not a Free Denison, has. Nay, And that shall not serve your turn neither, for it is not only so, But *he that departs from Iniquity, makes himself a prey*, Isai. 59. 13, 14, 15. that is, You are exposed to the Mercy of the Free-Booters that sally out of their Garison upon you; that is, you are delivered up to the Violence, and Rage, and Cruelty of all their other *Penal Insnaring Laws*, to be Ruined and Destroyed by them; this sets a Mark on you for them to shoot at you.

And *Secondly*, These *Tests* robs Men of their Religion and Conscience, which is consequently to rob Men of their *Souls*: They must quit their Profession, be it what it will, and become Members with them of the Church Established by Law, by Sinful Qualifications, though it be against their Consciences; So that the last Error is worse than the first. Now I pray, How can any Man call himself a Free-born *Englishman*, when all that are Born since these *Tests* have been Inacted, are born with Yokes about their Necks? And shall any honest sober People of any sort, be fond of these *Insnaring Laws and Tests?* Truly I had

almost said as the Apostle *Paul* said to the *Galatians* in another case, *O foolish People, who hath bewitched ye, that ye should be fond of your Misery*? What would you make ye Bands to go back again to *Egypt*? How long will ye stay and Dote upon them that smote ye? *Isa.* 10.20. *And it shall come to pass in that Day, that the Remnant of* Israel, *and such as are escaped of the House of* Jacob, *shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy one of* Israel. In Truth these *Tests* were worse than the *Penal-Laws* themselves, some of them, as much as the Cause is worse than the Effect, which is but the Product of the Cause; For it was *that* it self, which not only gave Being to those Persecuting Laws to come upon us; but also encouraged the Persecutors, and secured them in all their Cruelty and Violence; It was their Great Lord *Protector*: For if a Dissenter pursued them, after they had robb'd and spoiled him of his Goods, namely, to Sue them; why away they run to the Garison of Free-Bobbers, and get into the Gates of Brass; and then out sallies a *Test* with a Chain and Shackles in his Hand, and claps it on him, and binds him Hand and Foot, and holds him fast, while the Robbers went and secured his Goods or Moneys in the *Tory Garison*: That is, If they Sued for it in any Courts of Judicature, when the Dissenter appears in Court before the Bench, the first thing they ask him was this, *viz.* When *was you at Church* and heard *Common-Prayer*? And when did you Receive the *Sacrament*, according to the Church of *England*, at your Parish Church? And then tender him the Oaths of *Allegiance and Supremacy*: If he was a *Quaker*, he is silent. Why then instead of having *Justice* done him, he had *Dirt* thrown upon him; and instead of going away eased by Justice, 'twas well if they escaped with only being loaden with Calumnies and filthy reproachful Names, *viz.* Rebels, and Traytors, and not worthy to live in the Nation, and the like; So that they could have no benefit of the Law: Nay, It was come to that pass at last, that if a Dissenter Sued a Church-of-*England*-Man for a Debt, some were so wicked as to take advantage, upon the account of their being Dissenters, and so go and give Notice privately of it to the Court, that the Man was a Dissenter; and then out comes these useful *Implements* that were so universally imployed on all Occasions, as well *Ecclesiastical* as *Civil*; namely,

namely, the *Tests*. At the very first opening the Cause, it may be, What Religion are you of? And tender them the Oaths: And when, and where were you *at Church* to hear *Common-Prayer*? And when did you *Receive the Sacrament* at your Parish Church? And he, honest Conscientious Christian, not being able to clear himself of these Snares and Tests, there he is held fast; and by this the Jury was prepared, being of the same stamp, to bring in their Verdict, and so to forswear themselves by giving unrighteous Judgment, they Judging the Man, *Prov.* 17. 15. and not the Cause; so that it was grown to a Proverb at last; *Do but shew me the Man, and I will tell you how his Cause will go*; that is, Let me but know his Principles and Inclinations: If he was a *Whig* or *Dissenter*, then to be sure the Cause went against him, right or wrong. So that these *Tests* Protected them in all manner of unrighteousnes; For if they did not swallow them (though it was that which a *Dog* in *Scotland* refused to do, even though it were well buttered) namely, if they would not take those *Tests*, or some of them at least, then there was no Justice to be had; or it may be they would get him *Excommunicated*, which did all at one blow; namely, Ruined and Destroyed him and his Wife and Children: And here is this *Test* in *Rev.* 13. 16, 17. *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a Mark in their Right hand, or in their Foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the Mark, or the Name of the Beast, or the number of his Name*; this was to Excommunicate them that did not take their *Tests*, which are the Marks of the Beast: So that the Sacred Ordinance of the *Lord's Supper* was made a Stalking Horse to cast the Net of Injustice upon the Dissenters, to catch them in, *Jer.* 5. 26. As well as they made it *a License* to *sell Ale* by, and a qualification for drunken debaucht Fellows to bear Arms in the *Trained Bands*; and also made this Blessed Ordinance of the *Lord's Supper*, a *Test*, subservient to other base purposes, and to accommodate Vile Secular, shameful Ends and Designs: And shall any Man, instead of Trembling and Abhorrence, to think of these God-provoking Abominations, dare still plead for the Continuance of them? And instead of Repenting for these Sins, and instead of looking for some tremendous Judgment to come upon the Nation for all these Abominations, be

afraid:

afraid to part with them? but put their Truſt in them, and Relye upon them? Which in Plain *Engliſh*, is to make a God of them, as I have already hinted; And God is a *Jealous God*; And therefore all theſe *Teſts* muſt be abrogated and broken in pieces, that the wrath of God that is kindled againſt the Nation, eſpecially againſt the Makers and Upholders of them, may be appeaſed and turned away, that the Nation may not be deſtroyed; for God will have all theſe Gates of Braſs broken in pieces, and all theſe Bars of Iron cut in ſunder, *Iſai.* 45. 1, 2. And the King that is Head of the Nation, and the Supreme Magiſtrate under God, is deſirous to have them all aboliſhed; And who dare to be againſt ſo good a Work as this will be? Theſe that are, I think are more fit to live in *Spain* than in *England*, or elſe to go to the Long Houſe in *Moore-Fields*.

For I do verily believe that there is not a Perſon that is grown to the years that come within the Verge of thoſe ſnares, from the Prince to the Beggar, whether Romaniſts or Proteſtants of any ſort whatſoever, Eccleſiaſtical or Civil, but have broken and violated ſome or other of theſe Laws, or ſome part of ſome of them; and ſo are vertually fallen into ſome of theſe Snares; Though a Blot is not a Blot until it is hit: The Eccleſiaſtical Commiſſioners might perhaps (if they were inclinable to rigorous Proceedings) find Blots enough to hit, in the great Champions and Impetuous Sticklers themſelves, againſt the Aboliſion of theſe Snares and Teſts. And is this ſuch a deſirable thing, that Men ſhould even venture their *Souls*, by proſtrating their Conſciences for the continuance of them among us? For the deſire of Sin is Sin; and what muſt the deſire of the *Cauſe* of Sin be, when God hath ſaid, *He that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own Soul*, which is to deſtroy it; *for all they that hate God, love Death*, *Prov.* 8. 36 And to diſobey God, is to hate God; the Command of God, is, To do by others as we would have them to do by us; and therefore I will appeal to God and all the World, whether to impoſe all theſe Inhumane-like *Teſts*, be to do as they would be done by?

It is a dreadful thing for a Nation or People to be guilty of Sin againſt the Law of God, without having a Law for it; But what muſt that People or Nation be guilty of, that have Laws among them in Being, and that plead for them that are eſſentially

ſinful

ſinful and a myſtery of Iniquity in themſelves? *Pſal.* 94. 20, 21. *Shall the throne of Iniquity have fellowſhip with thee, which frameth Miſchief by a Law? They gather themſelves together againſt the Soul of the Righteous, and condemn the Innocent Blood: But the Lord is my defence, and my God is the rock of my Refuge.* O horrible Impiety! in them that are thirſting after Innocent Blood by a *Malicious* deſire! I do not mean of an Ignorant Deſire of the continuance of theſe Bloody *Penal Laws and Teſts*, for ſome miſtaken Advantages they hope to derive from them. I think it highly concerns his Majeſty, who is the Supreme Magiſtrate, to go on in his generous noble Reſolutions and Purpoſes, to have all theſe Inſnaring Laws and Teſts aboliſhed and utterly Repealed; for it is an Indiſpenſable Duty of a Supreme Magiſtrate eſpecially, to have all Iniquity puniſhed and deſtroyed, and theſe Laws are none of the leaſt; As alſo he is to be a Terror to Evil doers, and a Praiſe to them that do well, *Rom.* 13. 3, 4. But if ſuch Laws be continued, and the Magiſtrates execute them, then are they a Praiſe to Evil doers, and a Terror to them that *do well*; which is to Invert the Law of God, and the Office of a Magiſtrate.

NOw that which remains, my dear Country-men of *England!* is this, *viz.* I beſeech you all to conſider of it, and do not deſpiſe the Riches of the grace, and goodneſs, and wonderful Wiſdom and Power of God, in giving and granting unto us this Glorious *Goſpel-Liberty*, and do not undervalue the King's Majeſty's Kindneſs and Juſtice, which God has made inſtrumental in his hand, for Delivering of us from all theſe Snares, and to break all theſe Yokes from off our necks, *Iſai.* 10.27. And made him a Nurſing Father unto us, *Iſai.* 49. 23, 24, 25, 26.

Ah Sirs! Do not ſlight and deſpiſe your own Birth-rights, nor trample the fundamental Laws of the Land under foot, by hankering after and pleading for unrighteous ſinful Laws; Do not harken to the Counſel of your worſt Enemies, whoſe worldly *Intereſt* it is to have them continued becauſe they deſpiſe their own Mercies: Do not you do ſo too, leaſt you may be led forth with the workers of Iniquity in the day of God's vengeance

geance that is a coming upon them: But let us bless and praise the Lord for his goodness towards us; Let it not be a Price put into the hands of *fools* that have no heart to it, *Prov.* 17.15,16. Be not afraid to lay your hand upon the Cockatrices Den; be not afraid to kill the old Snake for fear of the *young ones* that are in her Belly; be not bubbled out of your Sense and Reason by frightful Notions of *future Events*, but study your *present Duty*, and do it, and leave the Event to God; such opportunities do not come every day. Therefore now you have the opportunity, put your selves out of any probability of suffering by your selves any longer; But that if it must be so, have your Brethren, that have been your Task Masters, in the same Bottom with you; which will then render Sufferings in that kind *impossible*, unless all the *Papists* in *France* come over to help them, which is non-sense to believe; if there was any such evil Intention, as they would make the World believe there is: But it is an old Maxim, *It is never safe following the Counsel of an Enemy.* Jer. 12.6.

O Sirs! Let us all joyn hands and hearts with his Gracious Majesty in this Glorious Work of the Lord (for which God has raised Him up) in chooſing such honest, able, sober, grave sage Men of all sorts, to sit in Parliament, as may break the Gates of Brass in pieces, and cut in sunder the Bars of Iron; namely, In Repealing and Abolishing all these sinful *Tests* and *Penal Laws*, that are so Abominable in the sight of God, and so Dishonourable to the Christian Religion, and so Destructive to the whole Body Politick of the Nation; and to turn this Glorious Christian Liberty into a Perpetual Law or *Magna Charta*, to be more Unalterable than that was of the *Medes* and *Persians*; that the Generations that come after us may have cause to bless God for it, and not to leave Snares and Yokes as a Curse for our Ignorance or Wilfulness, to our Posterity; but that *England* may give Laws by Pattern or Example, to all the Kingdoms and Nations round about us, that their Kings, their Nobles, and Gentry, and all Inferiour Magistrates, may Imitate ours, and that his Majesty's Name may be set up as a *Monument* of Clemency and Goodness to all future Generations, as *Cyrus* (his Type) is.

Now,

Now, Dear Gentlemen, I hope what I have written, will not give Offence to any ſober, honeſt Man of the Church of *England*, or any Perſwaſion whatſoever; for I deſign nothing in all my Diſcourſe, eſpecially the ſharp Edge of it, againſt ſuch, but againſt all thoſe *Penal Laws* and *Teſts* that are Sinful in themſelves, and alſo againſt that Spirit of Perſecution that has ſo long Raged among us, and that has ruined and undone ſo many thouſands of Perſons and Families, and brought ſo much Poverty, and ſuch great Decay of Trade upon us, which is that which all ſober, honeſt People, as well of the Church of *England*, as others, have often Condemned, both in Writing and Preaching: And if they be Good, then they ought not to have Condemned them by Writing or Preaching againſt them: But on the other hand, if they be Evil, then they ought not to be againſt the Aboliſhing of them. And if the recital of Oppreſſing Laws be ſo harſh, and the rehearſal of a little of the Practick part of Perſecution and Oppreſſion (inſtead of much that was acted) be ſo grievous to any Perſons to hear, eſpecially them that are the Actors herein, and that was Guilty thereof; Then how Grievous and Dreadful muſt it be to all thoſe many thouſands of dear Souls that have found and felt the ſad Effects of it, by ſuffering thereby; that have lain Groaning and Bleeding ſo many Years under the Intolerable burden of them?

And I hope I have good Authority from the Word of God for what I have here written, and alſo from his Majeſty's Gracious Declaration for *Liberty of Conſcience*, to declare my Conſcience in this Matter at this Time: And that is the two chief Reaſons, together with the Earneſt Deſire of ſeveral ſober, honeſt Men, that prevailed with me to Print it; they Judging that it might be of ſome uſe at this Juncture of Time. But I am not againſt the continuation of all the Good and Wholeſome *Penal Laws* and *Teſts* of the Land, but for the continuance of them.

Now if I am miſtaken in my Judgment, I humbly beg your Pardon; that is, if I have Judged any one of theſe *Spiritual Penal Laws* and *Teſts* to be Sinful, which are not ſo; but this I ſhall humbly leave to God, in the firſt place; and in the ſecond, to his Majeſty; and in the third place, to the Two Honourable

Houſes of Parliament. And I beſeech the Lord, when the King ſhall think fit to Call and Convene a Parliament, to give them all Counſel from Above, and direct them by his holy Spirit what to do in this great and weighty Affair, that they may all aim at the glory of God, and then they cannot but aim at the Good and Welfare of the Nation——And I pray remember, that what I have here Offered, is but by way of Suppoſition; and alſo I have given you my own Opinion of theſe things as they now ſtand, as I am an *Engliſhman*, and of the Body Politick of the Nation.

I am not for Infringing of any Man's True Liberty and Property in the leaſt, either Chriſtian or Civil, but I am for the true Eſtabliſhment of it upon its due Baſis, as his Majeſty hath often declared His Deſire and Reſolution therein——And to be done with ſuch a Fixedneſs, that it might be Unſhaken and Unalterable by Man; which is the only way to cement and unite the whole Nation in Love and Affection, which can never be expected while theſe *Penal Laws* are in Being; now take away theſe, and make it a Common Intereſt, and ſet all Men upon a Level under the Government, and then if one Party did begin to Inſult over any other, that Party muſt become the common Enemy to all the reſt; which would prove fatal to any ſuch Preſumption. But for People to Talk of Union in Love and Affection while theſe Laws are in Being, is Ridiculous; nay, it is Non-ſenſe; Nay further, it is a contradiction in it ſelf, for it is a thing impoſſible to be obtained, though all the Miniſters of all ſorts ſhould Preach it up, and all the Writers write for it, and preſcribe Ways and erect Schemes for the accompliſhing of it, they would all prove Phyſicians of no value, it would all be vain, and but beating the Air, or making a Coat for the Moon, and no more be obtained than a Reconciliation between Light and Darkneſs can, or to unite Fire and Water together; it is impoſſible: It is juſt as if we ſhould go about to build a Caſtle with Stubble, and lay the Foundation thereof in Fire: You muſt remove the Cauſe of Diviſion, before the Effect will or can ceaſe; You muſt withdraw this Wood, before this Fire can or will go out. The old Maxim has been, *Unite and Strengthen*; and on the other hand, *Divide and Deſtroy*——But now it ſeems to be quite Reverſed; namely, to keep up the very

very Foundation or Cauſe of Diviſion on foot——which is to Divide to Strengthen; and the Aboliſhing of which Laws would be to Unite, which is to Deſtroy or Weaken, which I cannot underſtand.

I will aſſure you for my part, if I had an Eſtate in Abby Lands, I ſhould look upon it to be better ſecured if the *Penal Laws* were taken away and Aboliſhed, than I ſhould if the ſaid Laws ſhould be continued.

But another great and main thing of all is this, namely, That God hath a Controverſie with the Nation for theſe things as well as for all other Sins, and therefore nothing but a univerſal Unfeigned Repentance and thorow Reformation, next unto the Blood of *Chriſt*, can appeaſe the wrath of God, and ſave us from utter Ruine and Deſtruction, and divert the Judgments that is hanging over our heads and ready to fall down upon us: But it is impoſſible that there can ever be a univerſal Unfeigned Repentance and thorow Reformation while theſe Laws are in Being, which are ſinful in themſelves; for if we repent of all ſins but one, and reſolve to retain that one ſin, be it what it will, we do not repent truly of any one ſin at all, it is no Repentance, it is but a mocking of God, for one Leak may ſink the the Ship if the Pump be not kept going; I do not ſpeak this without Book, ſee *James* 2. 10. *For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* Why, ſo here, to indulge one Sin, is to indulge all Sins; and therefore before the Nation can be united and reconciled to God and one another in Love and hearty Affection, Sin muſt be abandoned and forſaken, which is the cauſe of all Evils that ſeparates us from God, and from one another in Love and Affections; theſe ſinful Laws muſt be Aboliſhed before this can be truly effected, which ſhould be the greateſt Motive, and the moſt ſwaſive Argument of all with us all, why we ſhould deſire to have all theſe ſinful Laws and Teſts aboliſhed.

I cannot tell which to admire moſt, the King's Generoſity in his Gracious Readineſs and fixt Reſolution to have theſe Laws Aboliſhed, or the Averſneſs of ſome People to part with them, who are leaning upon theſe *Egyptian* Reeds, which will pierce them through, if they have not a care and come off from them.

O this horrible raging Sin of Unbelief, and Defidence in God, that does so blind the minds of Men, that they cannot see where their true Interest lyeth! neither can they see the hand of God that is lifted up against us for all those Abominations that are to be found reigning among us! The Lord awaken us all to unfeigned Repentance and thorow Reformation, before the Decree, that seems to be now travelling with Wrath and Judgment, bring forth; that our Iniquity may not prove our Ruine.

Thus I have Humbly offered you my Opinion, and also my Advice, in this great and weighty Matter; and leave it to your Serious Consideration. Hoping that you will not account me your Enemy, because I have told you the Truth, *Gal.* 4. 16. And so, my Dear Country men all, fare you well.

POST-

Postscript.

Gentlemen,

YOu that were Persecutors, (that call your selves *Christians*, and of the Church of *England*) be not offended with his Gracious Majesty for Suspending the *Penal Laws* and *Tests* by virtue of his Royal Prerogative; For if it be possible that one Party can have more reason to be Thankful to the King for his Gracious Declaration for *Liberty of Conscience* than another, it is you, *Gentlemen*, that were and are still of a Persecuting Spirit: For pray which is the greatest Favour, to preserve a Man in his Riches, or to make a Man Rich that was Poor? Pray which is the greatest kindness, in the Effect of it, to preserve an honest Man from being Ruined and Undone, and so Destroyed, or to make them (wicked men) honest, that would have ruined and undone him, and so Destroyed him? Which is the greatest kindness, to preserve an Honest man in his Honesty, or to make of a Knave an Honest man? Indeed, Gentlemen, His Majesty has wrought more upon you in one little short Sermon, by a few Pithy Lines in his Gracious Declaration, than all the Sermons that ever you heard read in your lives before, in the Church of *England*; for many of their Preachers (though some of them are

Moderate

Moderate and Good men) were for Daubing with that perſecuting untempered Mortar, and for ſewing of Pillows under all Arm-holes: *Ezek.* 13. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18. *They healed alſo the Hurt of the Daughter of my People ſlightly, ſaying, Peace, peace, when there is no Peace,* Jer. 6. 14. And you alſo that are of a Perſecuting Spirit (for 'tis to ſuch only that I ſpeak here) above all Men ſhould be for his Majeſty's taking off and Aboliſhing of all theſe *Penal Laws* and *Teſts*, as much as a Sick Perſon ſhould be for the Phyſician to remove the very cauſe of his Diſeaſe, for fear of a Relapſe; Nothing can Cure the Plague of Perſecution, under God, but an Act of Abolition; that is the only Sovereign Antidote againſt this Contagious Diſeaſe; for if the Cauſe remain, your old Diſtemper may relapſe upon you again, and that may prove Mortal unto you. *Matt.* 12. 43, 44, 45. *When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt and findeth none; then he ſaith, I will return into my Houſe from whence I came out; and when he findeth it empty, ſwept and garniſhed, then goeth he and taketh with himſelf ſeven other Spirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there, and the laſt State of that man is worſe than the firſt: Even ſo ſhall it be alſo unto this wicked Generation.* Thus you ſee how dangerous a thing a Spiritual relapſe is, whatever thoſe ſmooth Teachers ſay, that ſew Pillows under your Arm holes, and bouſter you up in your Perſecuting, violent, perverſe Spirit; who have told thoſe that were Magiſtrates, from under their *Sounding-Boards*, That they were Forſworn if they did not put the Laws in Execution againſt the Diſſenters. But his Gracious Majeſty (the Lord Reward him for it with the Dew of Heaven, and

the

the Fatneſs of the Earth) has rended thoſe Pillows and Bouſters away again from them, Bed and all; and is making of you Honeſt men, whether you will or no. His Majeſty has proved the good *Samaritan*; Therefore you have the moſt Reaſon now at this time to offer your Sacrifice of *Lives* and *Fortunes* by way of thankful Acknowledgment to his Majeſty, for his Benign Goodneſs unto you in working ſo great *a Cure* upon you; for He hath cured you that were Perſecutors, of a diſtemper that has coſt many a Man his Neck at the *Triple-Tree*; only *yours* had the Sanction of *a Law*, tho more than ever God made, or appointed. And herein his Majeſty Excels all his Royal Predeceſſors, ſince they could only cure the *King's Evil* (as it is called)—— But his preſent Majeſty has cured the *Peoples Evil* too; and I hope will (before He hath done) abſolutely cure (beyond hazard of Relapſe) that old *Parliamentary Diſeaſe* or *Evil*, alſo, of forcing Mens Conſciences to ſuch and ſuch notions of Religion. Even like the good *Samaritan* (in *Luke* 10. 30.) His Gracious Majeſty has by his Healing Declaration for *Liberty of Conſcience*, cured the poor wounded Diſſenters of all ſorts. The Text is ſo appoſite to this purpoſe, that I cannot but recite it at large, and recommend it to Conſideration. *A certain Man went down from* Jeruſalem *to* Jericho, *and fell among Thieves, which ſtript him of his Rayment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain Prieſt that way, and when he ſaw him, he paſſed by on the other ſide. And likewiſe a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and paſſed by on the other ſide*: (Here was but cold comfort from the *CHURCH-MEN.*) *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when*

he

he saw him he had compassion on him; and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in Oyl and Wine, and set him on his own Beast, and brought him to an Inn, and took care of him: And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the Host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was Neighbour unto him that fell among the Thieves? And he said, He that shewed Mercy on him: Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise: Even so, do you Church-of-*England*-men now Learn of his Gracious Majesty *JAMES the Just and Beneficent*; and no longer Oppose his Goodness and Clemency in His Generous Princely Resolution, not only in His giving *Liberty of Conscience*, but in his Royal Purpose, to Maintain it, and to turn it into a *MAGNA CHARTA*, for the Good and Benefit of future Ages; Which (under God) will be the only Preservative of these Nations in Peace and Prosperity. And therefore let every True *Englishman* thereunto heartily say, *AMEN*.

FINIS.

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